

Hello members of the Education Committee,

My name is Joe Velky, and I am the Vice President of the Woodbury FFA Chapter. I wanted to thank you for listening to our claims on why this bill is so important for the future generation and our great country. If it wasn't for the FFA, I wouldn't be the person I am today. Growing up, I was the most shy and introverted kid you would ever meet. I probably talked about 10 words a day. But when I came into the FFA program, my whole life changed for the better. In the span of just one semester in my freshman year, I went from reserved and quiet to ambitious and outgoing. The program lit a fire inside me that has pushed me to become the best version of myself, and to lift others up with me. Nothing compares to the joy I feel getting to come to school each day just because of the people in the program. The FFA gives students the education, not only in their study field of choice, but in leadership, public speaking and self-advocating as well. Why wouldn't we want to give as many students that chance? With proper funding, the FFA can accept more students into the program, fulfill their proper education requirements, and send them into the workforce, ready to change the world. This is why agricultural education programs deserve equal funding as other school choice programs.

Thank you